

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Argo Products Co.

#### Missouri Enterprise

#### Argo Products Achieves Iso 9002 Registration

##### Client Profile:

Argo Products is a general fabricating company in the heart of St. Louis, Missouri. The company supplies wire-formed products to the principal lawn mower companies. Argo Products also provides metal stampings and welded assemblies, and performs flattening, piercing, offsetting, and drilling services. The company employs less than 100 people.

##### Situation:

Argo Products is committed to continuous improvement. The company believed obtaining ISO registration would help it become more efficient, improve part costs, and expand sales. Argo Products contacted the Missouri Enterprise Business Assistance Center (Missouri Enterprise), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to help identify areas in which its practices did not meet all the requirements of the ISO standard.

##### Solution:

Together, Missouri Enterprise and Argo Products developed an ISO action plan and assigned various tasks to Argo Products employees. During regular visits, Missouri Enterprise personnel monitored, mentored, and provided assistance with task accomplishment while developing new and refined systems. In some instances, Missouri Enterprise performed specified ISO tasks. Internal auditing, a new practice at Argo, required specific training. Document control became a complex task because controlling the many types of documents used at Argo proved difficult. Because up to five different languages are spoken among employees at Argo, the documents required visual graphics and translation to multiple languages.

Missouri Enterprise also delivered ISO training (with the assistance of an interpreter) to employees in preparation to be measured not in terms of number of parts, but rather number of correct parts. Union personnel participated in and became a part of the success of the project.

To internalize the new ISO policies, management introduced an "Argo ISO Card." Each employee's card is punched every time s/he correctly states the new quality policy. The punches can be redeemed any time for a free soft drink for one punch or a free lunch for five punches.

Argo Products achieved ISO 9002 certification in April 2002.

##### Results:

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Achieved ISO 9002:1994 registration in April 2002.

Currently performing data analysis and compliance actions to upgrade to the new 2000 standard.

Advanced from hand sorting to measuring internal defects in terms of parts per million.

Increased sales by \$2 million.

Made a \$500,000 capital investment.

Invested \$100,000 in job skills training.

Created 25 jobs.

Saved 100 jobs.

### Testimonial:

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